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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000002

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE JOHN BERGEMANN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EZ](#)
SUBJECT: VP BIDEN'S MEETING WITH CZECH PRIME MINISTER
FISCHER, OCTOBER 23, 2009

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Charles O. Blaha; reasons 1
.4(b) and (d).

11. (U) Vice President Biden met with Czech Prime Minister
Jan Fischer in Prague on October 23, 2009.

U.S. Participants

Vice President Joseph R. Biden
Charge d, Affaires Mary Thompson-Jones
Antony Blinken, National Security Advisor to the Vice
President
Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, NSC Senior Director for Europe
Barry Pavel, NSC Senior Director for Defense Policy and
Strategy
Pamela Quanrud, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe
Sumona Guha, Special Advisor for Europe and Eurasia to the
Vice President
John Law, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy Prague

Czech Participants

Mr. Jan Fischer, Prime Minister
Mr. Jan Kohout, 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Foreign Affairs
Mr. Vladimir Tosovsky, Minister of Industry and Trade
Ms. Miroslava Kopickova, Minister of Education, Youth and
Sports
Mr. Peter Kolar, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the USA
Mr. Tomas Pojar, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Jan Fulik, Deputy Minister of Defense
Mr. Jan Novak, Head of the Office of the Government
Ms. Jana Dvoranova, Office of the Government, Advisor for
Defense, Security and Foreign Policy
Mr. Roman Prodak, Spokesperson for the Office of the
Government
Mr. Roman Bohacek, Interpreter

12. (S/NF) Summary. Vice President Biden and Prime Minister
Fischer discussed missile defense, energy security, and
Afghanistan during their bilateral meeting in Prague on
October 23. Vice President Biden explained that the U.S.
decision to adopt a new phased, adaptive approach to missile
defense was based on a new understanding of the threat from
Iran. The new system would provide better security for the
United States and for Europe. Prime Minister Fischer said
the Czech Republic would like to play a role in the new
system, particularly with respect to Research and Development
components. Vice President Biden said he believed Europe
could do more to strengthen its own energy security. Prime
Minister Fischer said the Czech Republic was trying to
diversify its sources of supply and transit, including by
developing nuclear power. Vice President Biden described the
ongoing U.S. strategy review for Afghanistan, emphasizing
that under no scenario was the U.S. considering leaving
Afghanistan. Prime Minister Fischer said that the Czech

Republic wants to strengthen its presence and capacity in Afghanistan. End Summary.

Missile Defense

¶3. (S/NF) Prime Minister Fischer said that the Czech Republic took note of the U.S. Administration's decision to adopt a new approach to missile defense, stating that the Czech Republic intended to continue its cooperation with the U.S., and all previous agreements would remain in place. In particular, the Czech Republic was interested in further cooperation on research and development aspects of the new missile defense architecture and other forms of scientific cooperation.

¶4. (S/NF) The Vice President said that the United States decided to adopt the new phased, adaptive approach to missile defense based on a new understanding of the threat from Iran, and it had nothing to do with Russia. Secretary Gates, who had heavily influenced the previous system, had been informed that short- and medium-range missiles from Iran were a more serious threat to the United States and its NATO Allies than previous estimates had projected. The new missile defense architecture would better protect the United States and Europe from this Iranian threat. The United States intends to consult closely with NATO Allies as the missile defense architecture is put in place. The first phase of the new system protects Europe's southern flank. Subsequent phases, which are still in development, would protect more areas in Europe. The new system would provide better protection for Europe than the previous program.

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¶5. (S/NF) The Vice President told Prime Minister Fischer that the U.S. would welcome Czech participation in the new system. In particular, if the Czech Republic wished to contribute something in terms of Research and Development, the U.S. would welcome its cooperation. The Vice President and Prime Minister Fischer agreed that U.S. and Czech delegations could discuss the details during the November 5-6 High Level Defense Group Meetings in Prague.

Other Defense Cooperation

¶6. (S/NF) Prime Minister Fischer noted that the Czech Republic is interested in acquiring C-130s. Prague also wanted more FMF funding; it sees a disparity between what it gets and what Poland gets under this program so would like to explore the possibility of receiving more funding. Fischer said the Czech Republic would like to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding for the Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation Agreement. The Vice President agreed that the United States and Czech Republic could explore many areas of defense cooperation other than those related to missile defense, and suggested that U.S. and Czech experts discuss the issues in more detail during the November 5-6 High Level Defense Group meetings in Prague.

Energy Security

¶7. (S/NF) Prime Minister Fischer said energy security was an important issue to the Czech Republic. He noted it was a key issue during the Czech EU Presidency in the first half of 2009. He characterized Czech diversification of energy sources as "poor" and said Prague is looking for alternative, safer routes of supply since it is still heavily dependent on Russia, and Belarus and Ukraine are unreliable transit countries. The Czech Republic also wants to pursue nuclear energy and has a tender out for a massive expansion of nuclear power capacity. Fischer noted that the U.S. company Westinghouse was under consideration for the tender to build nuclear power plants.

¶8. (S/NF) Vice President Biden said he was interested in discussing energy security, and expressed the view that Europe as a whole could do much more for itself to respond to Russia's use of energy as a blunt political weapon. It was in the U.S. interest for Europe to have increasing energy independence and multiple sources of supply. The United States was ready to work with Czech Republic on the range of energy issues, including wind, energy efficiency, and developing alternate sources of supply. The Vice President advocated for the Czech Republic to choose Westinghouse for its future purchase of nuclear power plants.

Afghanistan

¶9. (S/NF) Prime Minister Fischer raised Afghanistan, saying the Czech Republic wants to strengthen its presence not only in numbers but in capacity. Despite budgetary pressures, Prague planned to send 35 more troops. It has made a specific proposition to purchase L-159 planes for Afghan forces and is waiting for a response from the U.S. side.

¶10. (S/NF) The Vice President described the ongoing U.S. strategy review for Afghanistan, saying the question was how to refine the strategy to stabilize Afghanistan, eliminate Al-Qaida, and stabilize Pakistan. He assured Prime Minister Fischer that under no scenario was the U.S. considering leaving Afghanistan. The Vice President thanked Prime Minister Fischer for the work that Czech soldiers were doing in Afghanistan.

U.S.-Czech Relations

¶11. (S/NF) The Vice President emphasized that the United States valued its relationship with the Czech Republic, and said the U.S. no longer asks what it can do for countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but what it can do with them. The Vice President said the United States views the Czech Republic as a partner and a leader in promoting a democratic and secure Europe. Prime Minister Fischer expressed appreciation for these remarks, noting that the Czech Republic is now a mature democracy that wants to assume increasing responsibilities on global issues.

Lucas